



HALLOWEEN PLANNER
SAMPLE Op-Ed
497 words

DON'T LET HALLOWEEN TURN INTO A NIGHTMARE
Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk

Americans who drive while impaired during Halloween make it one of the year's most dangerous and deadliest holidays due to alcohol-related crashes.

Since Halloween falls on a Monday this year, dedicated Halloween partiers will be out in full force, beginning their celebrations the weekend before. This makes the Halloween weekend a very dangerous time on our nation's roads because of impaired drivers who fail to designate a sober driver.

In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 53 percent of all highway fatalities at Halloween in 2003 were alcohol-related -- and 45 percent of the total fatalities involved a drunk driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of 0.08 or higher – the legal limit in every state including [State].

That is why [Local Organization] is joining with other national, state and local highway safety officials this season to aggressively remind folks never to drive impaired and to designate a sober driver before the Halloween parties begin.

[Optional enforcement paragraph if planning a strong enforcement push: Local law enforcement will be out in full force with sobriety checkpoints and roving patrols to catch, stop and arrest impaired drivers. Those planning on using alcohol this Halloween need to play it smart and designate a sober driver before they go out.]

Real-life Halloween nightmares are simple to avoid if you remember to take a few important steps in planning for your Halloween weekend:

- Be responsible and never drive impaired.
- If you plan to drink, choose your sober driver before going out.
- Once impaired, use mass transit, call a cab or ask a sober friend to get you home.

- If all else fails, just stay where you are and sleep it off.
- Always buckle up – it's still your best defense against an impaired driver.
- If you are hosting a Halloween party, make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.

[Optional Sober Rides paragraph: (Local Organization) is promoting a special Halloween sober rides program from (Dates & Times). To get more information about a free ride home if you find yourself impaired on Halloween, please call (Number).

Statistics compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for 2004 show that nearly 13,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver or a motorcycle operator with an illegal blood alcohol concentration level of 0.08 or higher.

Driving a vehicle while impaired is simply a dumb thing to do. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for drunk driving are a nightmare that can last a lifetime.

Don't let your Halloween turn into a nightmare. Please plan ahead, be responsible and always designate a sober driver before all Halloween festivities. Remember, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk.*

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